

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MONTRE 01434 282122Z

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SUBJ: PRATT AND WHITNEY STRIKE ENDS

REF: MONTREAL'S A-105 AUGUST 4, 1975 AND PREVIOUS

1. THE STRIKE OF PRODUCTION WORKERS AT PRATT AND WHITNEY CANADA, LTD. (FORMERLY UNITED AIRCRAFT OF CANADA LTD.), WHICH BEGAN IN JANUARY 1974, ENDED ON AUGUST 28, 1975. AFTER UNION REJECTED COMPANY'S JULY 30 "FINAL OFFER", QUEBEC PREMIER ROBERT BOURASSA MET WITH BOTH SIDES IN THE DISPUTE AND ON AUGUST 15 ANNOUNCED A FORMULA FOR FINAL SETTLEMENT, COMMENTING AT TIME, "WHOEVER REJECTS THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE HEAD OF GOVERNMENT MUST SUFFER THE CONSEQUENCES." (HE DID NOT INDICATE WHAT THESE CONSEQUENCES WOULD BE.)

2. MR. BOURASSA RECOMMENDED: (A) THAT 504 STRIKERS BE REHIRED WITHIN 12 WEEKS; (B) THAT THE REMAINDER OF THE STRIKERS BE REHIRED BY FEBRUARY 29, 1976; (C) THE APPOINTMENT OF AN INDEPENDENT ARBITRATOR TO DECIDE THE FATE OF 38 WORKERS FACING CRIMINAL CHARGES (FOR THE MAY 12 VIOLENT OCCUPATION OF THE PLANT); (D) THE CALCULATION OF STRIKE TIME IN ESTABLISHING EMPLOYEE SENIORITY; AND (E) THAT STRIKERS BE GUARANTEED THEIR FORMER JOBS AND PAY RATES OR THE TOP PAY SCALE OF WHATEVER LOWER RANKING JOB

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 02 MONTRE 01434 282122Z

THEY ARE ASSIGNED TO.

3. PRATT AND WHITNEY OFFICIALS ACCEPTED THE PREMIER'S FORMULA ON AUGUST 18. ON AUGUST 19, EXECUTIVES OF STRIKING LOCAL 510 OF THE UNITED AUTO WORKERS SAID THEY PROPOSED TO RECOMMEND ACCEPTANCE OF THE FORMULA BUT ONLY AFTER ALL MEMBERS HAD STUDIED AND VOTED ON A RETURN TO WORK AGREEMENT TO BE SIGNED BY ALL PARTIES. THE UNION'S RATIFICATION CAME ON AUGUST 26, WITH 72 O/O OF THE 789 STRIKERS VOTING IN FAVOR OF THE GOVERNMENT'S PROPOSAL (572 YES, 210 NO, AND 7 VOID BALLOTS). THE NEW CONTRACT AND RETURN TO WORK AGREEMENT WERE SIGNED ON AUGUST 28 AND THE FIRST GROUP OF STRIKERS WILL RETURN TO WORK ON SEPTEMBER 2, WITH SOME 60 TO BE REHIRED DURING THE FIRST WEEK.

4. ALTHOUGH THE UNION VOTE WAS OVERWHELMINGLY IN FAVOR OF THE BOURASSA FORMULA, OFFICIALS OF UAW LOCAL 510 ARE NOT ENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT THE RESULTS OF WHAT HAS BEEN DESCRIBED AS THE TOUGHEST STRIKE IN QUEBEC'S LABOR UNION HISTORY. UNION OFFICIALS HAVE BEEN REPORTED AS SAYING THEY HAD NO CHOICE. ONE UNION OFFICIAL, IN AN AUGUST 27 RADIO INTERVIEW, SAID THAT ALTHOUGH THE STRIKE DID NOT RESULT IN HIGHER WAGES FOR THE STRIKERS, IT "ESTABLISHED THEIR DIGNITY." HE ADDED THAT, IF THE STRIKE RESULTS IN LEGISLATION MAKING MANDATORY THE DUES CHECK-OFF PROVISION OF THE RAND FORMULA AS QUEBEC GOVERNMENT LEADERS PROMISED EARLIER, IT WILL PROVE TO HAVE BEEN ONE OF THE MOST SIGNIFICANT LABOR DISPUTES IN QUEBEC HISTORY.

5. IT IS INTERESTING THAT ONE ASPECT OF THE RETURN TO WORK AGREEMENT HAS RECEIVED LITTLE MEDIA ATTENTION. THE COMPANY AGREED TO THE UNCONDITIONAL REHIRING OF 504 WORKERS WITHIN THE NEXT 12 WEEKS. HOWEVER, IT SAID IT WOULD REHIRE THE 238 REMAINING STRIKERS BEFORE FEBRUARY 29, 1976 ONLY IF GENERAL ECONOMIC CONDITIONS CONTINUE AT EXPECTED LEVELS, ITS WORK CONTRACTS DO NOT DECREASE SIGNIFICANTLY, AND THERE IS A NORMAL TURNOVER OF PERSONNEL AT THE PLANT. IN VIEW OF UNION'S REPEATED CLAIMS THAT NONE OF THE STRIKERS WOULD RETURN TO WORK UNLESS ALL WERE REHIRED, WE QUERIED A PRATT AND WHITNEY SPOKESMAN ABOUT THIS. HE SAID THAT THESE CONDITIONS WERE DISCUSSED AT LENGTH WITH THE UNION PRIOR TO THE AUGUST 26 UNION VOTE AND THAT THE COMPANY HAD INSISTED THAT THESE CONDITIONS MUST REMAIN IN THE RETURN TO WORK AGREEMENT.

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 03 MONTRE 01434 282122Z

6. REACTIONS TO THE SETTLEMENT WILL BE REPORTED LATER.
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